

**BOROUGH OF WATCHUNG
OPEN SPACE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
FEBRURY 27, 2012 MINUTES**

Salute to the flag.

Ms. Beck-Clemens called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. The Chair called for a roll call. Present at the call of the roll were:

Beck-Clemens [x] Cooper [x] Jacques [x] Franklin [x] Schaefer [x]
Spingler [x] Stout [x] and provisional member Tucker [x]

The chair stated that the Open Space Advisory Committee (OSAC) is a committee by Ordinance.

Chairperson Beck-Clemens asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the January 23rd meeting. That motion was made by Mrs. Schaefer and seconded by Mrs. Cooper. A voice vote was taken and this motion was unanimously passed.

Councilman Thomas Franklin was introduced as the new Council liaison to the committee and given a very warm welcome by all.

Susan Tucker was introduced as the provisional member representing the Historical Commission. The Borough Council will vote on her nomination at their next meeting.

Old Business:

1. Ness Property and Camp Endeavor. Councilman Franklin and Ms. Tucker were informed of the OSAC's suggestions for these properties.
 - a. Mr. Franklin stated that the Borough is currently working with Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) to capture the towns' escrowed \$1MM.
 - b. According to Mr. Franklin, the Ness property has been cleared of drums, cans and metal debris by The clean-up contractor is Wayne Boylan . Maser consulting hasn't started the environmental clean up yet.
 - c. Councilman Franklin said that the Mayor is in the process of appointing a separate Ness Committee.
2. Open Space Trust Fund (the Fund): (Article VIII, 2-70.3)

The Fund established in 1998 and actuated in 1999 puts a \$0.02 levy per \$100.00 of the assessed valuations and the tax rate. Of note, this tax was suspended for fiscal year 2011. Mr. Franklin said that this tax will be reinstated for 2012 and that the balance is approximately \$773,000.

3. Re-examination of the Open Space and Recreation Plan (the Plan) of 2006.
The committee would like to investigate a re-examination including the updating of properties identified in the original 2006 Plan.
4. OSAC members will go back to their respective Boards and query them on suggestions for the Ness and Camp Endeavor properties and report back to this Committee.
5. Mission Statement: is contained in the Spring Newsletter Article, which has been submitted to the Mayor for publication

New Business:

1. Ness Property:
 - a. Councilman Franklin has copies of the public survey conducted in 2008 for this committee's review He will have a copy made.
 - b. Franklin also mentioned that the council thinks that keeping the barn and the milk house on the Ness property is too expensive.
 - c. The OSAC would like to have a structural assessment performed on the barn and the milk house to decide just what the renovations costs would be. Ms. Schaefer will provide the name of the barn expert in Ringoes.
 - d. Discussion ensued as to uses of the barn, which included storage, public meeting area for scouts, seniors, garden club, etc. The milk house could be used as a concession stand and off-site rest rooms, etc.
 - e. Mrs. Spingler discussed the Willowood Arboretum and passed out photos and a brochure of this renovated open space in Gladstone, NJ. Please refer to www.willowwoodarboretum.org
 - f. Mr. Stout discussed various Grant Applications available for renovating open space areas into community gardens which follow:
 - i. The Sustainable Jersey Small Grants Program funded by Walmart.
 - ii. ScottsMiracle-Gro Grant Program for Community Garden and Green Space Development.
 - g. Mr. Stout also had literature on establishing community gardens:
 - i. "Starting a Community Garden" www.communitygarden.org
 - ii. "Community Gardens Taking Root" Published by NJ. Com Everything Jersey on February 21, 2011. This announced the Community Garden Conference on March 3 at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, 353 E. Hanover Road, Morris Township.
 - h. The OSAC will write a letter to the Council with their suggestions for preserving the building on the Ness Property.
2. Camp Endeavor
 - a. Mr. Franklin discussed why it is not feasible to have a dog park on this property, or anywhere else in the Borough for that matter.

3. Mrs. Cooper mentioned that her church, St. Mary's, would be interested in the wood from the Ness property barn, should it be dismantled, for their nativity set.

Public Forum:

There was no one from the public at this meeting.

The Chair adjourned the meeting until the next meeting of March 19th at 7:00 pm in Borough Hall.

Respectfully Submitted by
Dianna Beck-Clemens